



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO MEDIA ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 26, 2007

Contact: Lesley Kirk, cell (619) 890-0692

HORSE TO BE VACCINATED TO PREVENT WEST NILE VIRUS

County Launches Annual "Fight the Bite" Campaign for West Nile Virus Awareness Week

WHAT: County Vector Control, Health and Human Services and the County Veterinarian will discuss the risks of West Nile virus and prevention measures to protect yourself and your animals. West Nile virus (WNV) is a preventable disease that can cause encephalitis, meningitis, long-term disabilities and even death. Horses and birds are particularly susceptible to the virus. More than 30% of horses that develop symptoms will die from the disease. Controlling mosquito breeding, eliminating backyard breeding sites, using personal protection and protecting animals are essential in preventing the spread of the virus.

WHEN: 9:30 a.m. on Friday April 27, 2007

WHERE: 1000 Gunpowder Point Drive at the Chula Vista Nature Center
(Off I-5 at the E St. exit)

WHO: Supervisor Greg Cox, District 1; Dr. Wilma Wooten, County Interim Public Health Officer; and Dr. Nikos Gurfield, County Veterinarian

VISUALS: Horse being vaccinated, birds of prey, mosquito larvae and adult mosquitoes, mosquito-eating fish, larvicide granules, insect repellents, and West Nile virus educational materials.

BACKGROUND: Unusually high temperatures throughout the state in March triggered an earlier than normal start to the WNV season. The virus has been detected in mosquito pools, sentinel chickens and/or horses in eight counties: San Diego, Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, Santa Clara, Sonoma and Stanislaus. In 2006, a total of 292 human WNV infections, including seven deaths, were reported in the 54 counties that detected WNV activity. Of the 58 horses that also tested positive for WNV, 24 died or were euthanized.

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